

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for processing electronic rebates, the method comprising:
linking a purchase identifier to a purchase of a product;
receiving information, via a network, entered by a user of a user computer system to complete a rebate claim for the purchased product;
verifying whether the received information includes the purchase identifier;
and
accepting the rebate claim from the user if the received information is verified as correct.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the linking comprises:
receiving the purchase identifier, via the network, from a store computer system.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the linking comprises:
receiving, via the network, a request for the purchase identifier from a store computer system;
generating the purchase identifier for the purchase of the product; and
transmitting, via the network, the purchase identifier to the store computer system.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the purchase identifier is listed on a receipt upon the purchase of the product.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the purchase identifier is contained in an electronic mail message transmitted from the store computer system to an electronic mail address accessible using the user computer system.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
transmitting an electronic mail message containing the purchase identifier, to an electronic mail address accessible using the user computer system.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
providing a web page, via the network, to the user computer system to enable the receipt of information for the rebate claim.
8. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
verifying whether the rebate claim is a valid request for the rebate.
9. The method of claim 6 wherein the request verifying comprises:
determining whether the rebate claim was previously processed.
10. The method of claim 6 wherein the request verifying comprises:
determining whether a limit of rebates for the product has been exceeded.
11. The method of claim 6 wherein the request verifying comprises:
determining whether the product was previously returned.
12. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
issuing a check to the user identified on the rebate claim.
13. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
transferring the rebate electronically to an account of the user identified on the rebate claim.
14. The method of claim 1 wherein the user computer system comprises one of a personal digital assistant (PDA) device and a personal computer.
15. The method of claim 1 wherein the network comprises the Internet and the received information is submitted from the user computer using a web browser program.

16. A computer system for processing electronic rebates, the computer system comprising:

 a memory for storing an electronic rebate program;

 a processor, upon executing the electronic rebate program, the processor is configured to:

 link a purchase identifier to a purchase of a product;

 receive information, via a network, entered from a user of a user computer system to complete a rebate claim for the purchased product;

 verify whether the received information includes the purchase identifier; and

 accept the rebate claim if the received information is verified as correct.

17. The computer system of claim 16 wherein the memory further stores a http (Hypertext Protocol) server program.

18. The computer system of claim 16 wherein the user computer system comprises one of a personal digital assistant (PDA) device and a personal computer.

19. The computer system of claim 16 wherein the network comprises the Internet and the received information is submitted from the user computer using a web browser program.

20. The computer system of claim 16 wherein the purchase identifier is listed on a receipt upon the purchase of the product.

21. The computer system of claim 16 wherein the purchase identifier is contained in an electronic mail message transmitted to an electronic mail address accessible using the user computer.

22. The computer system of claim 16 wherein the purchase identifier is received via the network from a store computer system.

23. The computer system of claim 16 wherein the processor is configured to create the purchase identifier in response to a request from a store computer system.

24. A computer readable medium storing a software program that, when executed by a computer, causes the computer to perform a method comprising:

- linking a purchase identifier to a purchase of a product;
- receiving information, via a network, entered from a user of a user computer system to complete a rebate claim for the purchased product;
- verifying whether the received information includes the purchase identifier;

and

- accepting the rebate from the user if the received information is verified as correct.

25. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the linking comprises:

- receiving the purchase identifier, via the network, from a store computer system.

26. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the linking comprises:

- receiving, via the network, a request for the purchase identifier from a store computer system;
- generating the purchase identifier for the purchase of the product; and
- transmitting, via the network, the purchase identifier to the store computer system.

27. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the purchase identifier is listed on a receipt upon the purchase of the product.

28. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the purchase identifier is

contained in an electronic mail message transmitted from the store computer system to an electronic mail address accessible using the user computer system.

29. The computer readable medium of claim 24 further comprising:
transmitting an electronic mail message containing the purchase identifier to an electronic mail address accessible using the user computer system.
30. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the method further comprises:
providing a web page, via the network, to the user computer system to enable the receipt of information for the rebate claim.
31. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the method further comprises:
verifying whether the rebate claim is a valid request for the rebate.
32. The computer readable medium of claim 31 wherein the request verifying comprises:
determining whether the rebate claim was previously processed.
33. The computer readable medium of claim 31 wherein the request verifying comprises:
determining whether a limit of rebates for the product has been exceeded.
34. The computer readable medium of claim 31 wherein the request verifying comprises:
determining whether the product was previously returned.
35. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the method further comprises:
issuing a check to the user identified on the rebate claim.

36. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the method further comprises:

transferring the rebate electronically to an account of the user identified on the rebate claim.

37. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the user computer system comprises one of a personal digital assistant (PDA) device and a personal computer.

38. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein the network comprises the Internet and the received information is submitted from the user computer using a web browser program.